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Writing women's agency into the history of the Federal Republic: "1968", historians and gender

The emancipation of women was one of the biggest changes transforming post-war West German society after 1945, and indeed Germany throughout the whole of the twentieth century. The change in gender relations was a long, uneven process that included setbacks and several dynamic thrusts of acceleration. In this, the Federal Republic of Germany was no different from many other highly industrialized societies. Still, much of the historiography on post-war Germany has failed to address the issue adequately, and to weave the political actions of women and the rise of female emancipation into its master narratives. This essay addresses the reasons for this failure, but also the implications of its reversal. It aims to show that the addition of feminism to West German history necessarily changes the agents driving the development, but also the definition of "success" in the teleological Westernization narrative of the Federal Republic. The first part of the article engages critically with the omission of female agency in the scholarship on post-war Germany. The second part focuses on a concrete example, based on original research: the role of women activists during West Germany's "1968." It serves as a showcase for the wide-ranging implications of the inclusion of feminist agency. The master narratives of the West German Sixties, but also of post-war West German history in general, emerge as in need of rewriting.[*]

Not coincidentally, all historians who have tackled the grueling task of writing large-scale national histories of post-1945 Germany (in German) have so far been men. Speculating on the reasons for this, Ute Frevert has emphasized the underlying quest for honor and fame within the German profession. Naming Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Thomas Nipperdey, Heinrich August Winkler and other colleagues, Frevert sees "a specific form of male authorship" at work where historiography becomes a performative contest among males who compete for power, honor and political impact. Frevert compares the authors to long-distance runners who try to outdo each other with single-authored volumes of a thousand pages or more. Like generals, they see "history as a battlefield on which troops are deployed against each other ... and

where one thinks in terms of victory and defeat."[1] The extent to which the German historical profession was and is dominated by men was also highlighted by the Oxford historian Lyndal Roper in a keynote address for the 2014 *Historikertag*. Roper took her German colleagues to task for failing to integrate gender perspectives into mainstream scholarship, and contrasted the situation unfavorably with the Anglo-American setting. Her diagnosis was of a "hidden gender hierarchy *[verborgene Genderhierarchie]*" in the field, stressing that the underrepresentation of female tenured professors (4 per cent in 1992, 12.6 per cent in 2002) was particularly acute in the fields of modern and contemporary history.[2] Indeed, this pattern reaches back decades. Ever since the first female history professors entered academia in Germany, they had disproportionately been hired in specialized subfields such as ancient history, medieval, Eastern European and non-European history – "not in modern and contemporary history which is particularly important for the production of national 'master narratives'."[3]

A male perspective shapes the "master surveys," or "Meistererzählungen" of modern German history, and mostly unintentionally so. To a large extent, existing studies on women's and gender history have not been incorporated into the weighty surveys of national history. To a lesser extent, the authors also bypass scholarship on areas often still seen as "feminized" – such as the history of family and kinship, private lives and emotions, sexuality and the body, or household economies. Where a political history approach is followed, "politics" is often still understood in the narrower sense, as relating to the state, its institutions, and the public sphere. Where a structural history approach rules, the "general" structures deemed worthy of attention largely exclude gender, women's and family issues because these are seen as "particular" and less relevant.[4] Therefore, gender relations, masculinity and

[1] Ute Frevert, "'I have often wondered at the person's courage' oder: Mut und Ehre der Meistererzähler," paper delivered at Bielefeld University, 11 September 2015. I thank Ute Frevert and Lyndal Roper for copies of their unpublished papers.
[2] Lyndal Roper, "Frauen in der Geschichtswissenschaft 1982-2012," Festvortrag at 50th Deutscher Historikertag, Göttingen 25 September 2014. The numbers above omit untenured junior and visiting professorships. If these are included, the number rises to 27 per cent in 2012: Karen Hagemann, "Gleichberechtigt? Frauen in der bundesdeutschen Geschichtswissenschaft," in: *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 13 (2016), 108-135, here 134.
[3] Ibid., 118.
[4] See Karin Hausen, „Die Nicht-Einheit der Geschichte als historiographische Herausforderung: Zur historischen Relevanz und Anstößigkeit der Geschlechtergeschichte," in *Geschlechtergeschichte und Allgemeine Geschichte: Herausforderungen und Perspektiven*, ed. Hans Medick and Anne-Charlott Trepp (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1998), 28-32, 45; Thomas Kühne, "Staatspolitik, Frauenpolitik, Männerpolitik: Politikgeschichte als Geschlechtergeschichte," in ibid., 171-231; Robert G. Moeller,

femininity, the private realm and subjectivities play only a marginal role in these much-cited tomes, and rarely inform the general narrative arc and the *telos* of the Federal Republic's development. A look at the most recent master surveys shows, for example, only minimal involvement with the history of the second wave of the women's movement.

Typically, the authors wholeheartedly acknowledge that a sea change took place but thereafter avoid in-depth discussion of it. They applaud the positive impact of the feminist movement while isolating it from the general narrative. Hans-Ulrich Wehler lauds the "undeniably successful track record" and the "secular triumphal procession *[Siegeszug]* of female emancipation" as "one of the biggest social changes of the epoch since 1945" but only allocates it eight of 439 pages.[5] Ulrich Herbert likewise asserts that "the women's movement was doubtless the most important" of all social movements of the time – using the same wording for both the West German and the American context – while compressing its treatment into less than one page in a 1451-page book.[6] Heinrich August Winkler devotes only one sentence to the topic in his survey. In Eckart Conze's history of the Federal Republic, a mere three out of 936 pages are devoted to the feminist wave – although Conze's red thread, the search for security and stability, could fruitfully have been applied to fears of emasculation and attempts to stabilize traditional gender relations. In his thirty-page chapter on the protests of the late 60s, female actors are absent while much is made of "1968" as conflict between sons and fathers.[7] The women's movement occupies a similar niche in Konrad Jarausch's history of Europe, where it is treated in one paragraph.[8] And while Edgar Wolfrum's survey pays some attention to women's experiences, feminist activism plays no role in the way the history of "1968" and the social movements of the 1970s are interpreted. The quotations and illustrations foreground male

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"The Elephant in the Living Room: Or Why the History of Twentieth-Century Germany Should Be a Family Affair," in *Gendering Modern German History: Rewriting Historiography*, ed. Karen Hagemann and Jean H. Quataert (New York: Berghahn, 2007), 228-49.

[5] Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte, vol. 5: Bundesrepublik und DDR, 1949-1990* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2008), 172, 184.

[6] Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte Deutschlands im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2014), 844, 861, 921-22.

[7] Heinrich August Winkler, *Der lange Weg nach Westen, vol. 2: Deutsche Geschichte vom Dritten Reich bis zur Wiedervereinigung* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2000), 352. Eckart Conze, *Die Suche nach Sicherheit: Eine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Munich: Siedler, 2009), 403-05, see also 355; 331-360, especially 337. Hannah Arendt is briefy cited, 332.

[8] Konrad H. Jarausch, *Out of Ashes: A New History of Europe in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 604, cf. 589-90.

protagonists.[9] Axel Schildt's 1999 history *Ankunft im Westen* discusses women's participation in the labour market but not the feminist movement. Though he devotes two sentences to the fact that many "68ers" were female, this does not affect his perspective on the protests.[10] In none of these cases are feminism or male dominance part of the overarching narrative.

Why do these surveys neglect the second women's movement to this extent, bypassing a growing body of historiography on women and gender in postwar Germany? Scholarly studies on feminist activism in West Germany,[11] and even more so on gender relations after 1945,[12] are readily available. In addition, a plenitude of primary sources informs us about contemporary women's political actions (in stark contrast to earlier periods of history which nevertheless have seen a more productive inclusion of gender in the scholarship[13]). There are two reasons the dominant master narratives insufficiently integrate the existing literature on women and gender: first, institutional marginalisation, and second, the gendered implications of conceptual frameworks such as "the West" and "political history."

In German academia, women's and gender history is still seen as a niche, rather than as essential component of historical scholarship. As recently as 2004, the German *Historikertag* conference was held without a single panel on women's or gender history, all such session proposals having been rejected. In marked contrast, at the 2004 annual meeting of the American Historical Association in Washington, D.C.,

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[9] Edgar Wolfrum, *Die geglückte Demokratie: Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2006), 261-71, 405-06.

[10] Axel Schildt, *Ankunft im Westen: Ein Essay zur Erfolgsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1999), 57-59, 187.

[11] See Kristina Schulz, *Der lange Atem der Provokation: Die Frauenbewegung in der Bundesrepublik und in Frankreich 1968-1976* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2002); Myra Marx Ferree, *Varieties of Feminism: German Gender Politics in Global Perspective* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012); Christine Thon, *Frauenbewegung im Wandel der Generationen* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2015); Ilse Lenz, ed., *Die neue Frauenbewegung in Deutschland: Abschied vom kleinen Unterschied: Eine Quellensammlung* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2nd ed. 2010).

[12] By no means a comprehensive list: Julia Paulus, Eva-Maria Silies and Kerstin Wolff, ed., *Zeitgeschichte als Geschlechtergeschichte: Neue Perspektiven auf die Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2012); Eva-Maria Silies, *Liebe, Lust und Last: Die Pille als weibliche Generationserfahrung in der Bundesrepublik 1960-1980* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010); Christine von Oertzen, *The Pleasure of a Surplus Income: Part-Time Work, Gender Politics, and Social Change in West Germany 1955-1969* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2007); Elizabeth D. Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Sybille Buske, *Fräulein Mutter und ihr Bastard: Eine Geschichte der Unehelichkeit in Deutschland 1900 bis 1970* (Wallstein Verlag, 2013); Robert G. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Theresia Degener, "Der Streit um Gleichheit und Differenz in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland seit 1945," in *Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts*, ed. Ute Gerhard (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1997), 871-99.

[13] See for example the historiography on early modern European witchcraft, or on gender relations during the French revolution.

about a quarter of the panels in Central European and German history dealt with women or gender issues.[14] Within Germany, contributions on women and/or gender in postwar German history are still overwhelmingly written by female authors, most of whom have not (or not yet) acquired one of the full professorships at German universities. Many of these authors belong to neighbouring disciplines, end up working outside Germany or are employed on short-term contracts and fill the lower ranks of the profession. Nowadays, there are only nine full history professorships fully or partly dedicated to gender history or women's history in Germany. These types of positions were mostly created during the 1980s and 1990s, not least in response to undergraduate and postgraduate students who vocally demanded them, and are currently under threat: When the incumbents retire, the professorships are often cut or redefined. A recent study on the role of women and gender-themed professorships in Germany points out that these positions were closely linked to and often crucial for gender scholarship outside academia – in the form of feminist museums, archives, libraries, centers, journals and projects. At the same time, they faced a practice of "marginalizing integration" within academia, where gender topics were repeatedly placed at the margins of the field and the associated researchers were labelled both "special" and "inferior" in internal power dynamics.[15] This situation is both a reason for and a symptom of the isolation and compartmentalization of women's and gender history in the field.

Another, deeper reason for the marginalization of feminist agency in historiography lies in the over-reliance on an idealized model of the West. When the narrative *telos* of Western liberalism is read into the history of West Germany, historians carry with them the baggage of this concept. In the introduction to the present special issue, Astrid M. Eckert and Frank Biess highlight the inherent exclusions of the "Westernization" and "liberalization" approach, stressing in particular the legacy of Western colonial violence and slavery. But they also mention the model's emphasis on "a Western (often explicitly or implicitly male) rational

[14] Karen Hagemann and Jean H. Quataert, "Gendering Modern German History: Comparing Historiographies and Academic Cultures in Germany and the United States through the Lens of Gender," in *Gendering Modern German History*, 28-30.
[15] 39 incumbents were interviewed for a study on the role of these gender-themed professorships; 23 of these positions were since cut and additional ones rededicated to other areas. Ulla Bock, *Pionierarbeit: Die ersten Professorinnen für Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung an deutschsprachigen Hochschulen 1984-2014* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2015).

enlightenment subject as the main agent in the process of democratization."[16] In fact, beyond the working classes, women were the biggest group excluded by the Western project of liberalism and progress, from the emergence of early liberalism during the eighteenth century to the struggle for women's suffrage in the early twentieth century. Therefore, the Western master narrative is inherently male in several respects. It originally assigned rationality to men and irrationality to women, agency to men and passivity to women. In the normative orbit of the West, a conscious effort is needed to imagine women driving progress. Where master narratives privilege 'political' issues in the traditional sense, they tend to reproduce a male cast of actors and strictly gendered forms of political action.[17] The concept of the West is therefore structurally underpinned by the foundations of patriarchy, even if this is rarely addressed openly.

If gender inequality is to be truly included in the Federal Republic's master narratives, new questions arise about the country's post-war "success story," the agents of change, caesuras and periodization. The starting point is to acknowledge that liberal Western democracy, as the norm that the Federal Republic has typically been measured against, was built on male dominance, and that there has been, to this day, a longstanding struggle against the continuing suppression and exclusion of women from the full promises of democracy and equality. Therefore, whenever historians emplot narratives of "liberalization," "democratization" or "Westernization," they need to integrate the overcoming of patriarchal structures, discourses, subjectivities and embodiments into their argument. They could ask to what extent post-1945 developments were a success story for women as well as for men. In how far did West German state and society retain patriarchal structures, thereby guaranteeing that husbands dominated wives? Which institutions, such as marriage and division of labor, or cultural dichotomies, such as productive versus reproductive work or public versus private spheres, reinforced gender inequality?[18] How and when did they change over time, and which limitations remained? Which groups challenged the patriarchal consensus and should therefore be credited with

[16] Introduction to this special issue, 20, see also 12-13, 26.
[17] See Kühne, "Staatspolitik," and the call for a reconfiguration of the metanarrative of Western modernity in: Lynn Hunt, "The Challenge of Gender: Deconstruction of Categories and Reconstruction of Narratives in Gender History," in *Geschlechtergeschichte und Allgemeine Geschichte*, ed. Medick and Trepp, 15-56.
[18] I use the term patriarchy to describe societies structured by male dominance, even though in the modern era, this dominance is less defined by fatherhood than by other factors. See Claudia Opitz, *Um-Ordnungen der Geschlechter: Einführung in die Geschlechtergeschichte* (Tübingen: diskord, 2005), 18-25.

driving progress? Which opposing groups defended the status quo, why, and how successfully? Lastly, the answers to these questions impact the grand narrative of the post-war era by affecting the periodization of post-Second World War history, with its current emphasis on the emergence of postmodernity and a new era "after the boom" beginning in the 1970s.

In the following pages, I present a case study on women activists in the West German protests of the late 1960s – activism that to date has largely been overlooked in mainstream historiography (though there are specialist publications). The female "1968," which includes the first stirrings of the second wave of the feminist movement, has generally been cast as a marginal by-product of the student revolt. Women's activism has been treated in isolation from the predominantly male "1968," if it has been treated at all. Histories of the West German Sixties habitually display images of men on the book covers: Rudi Dutschke, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Fritz Teufel and Rainer Langhans have become the icons of the rebellion.[19] In the public imaginary, mention of "1968" conjures up images of SDS debates in overcrowded lecture halls and student demonstrations, invariably with men at the microphones and marching in the first row. In most accounts, female "68ers" function mainly as the rebels' arm candy – attachments who brewed the coffee, sewed the flags and typed the leaflets for their male comrades.[20] Feminists such as Helke Sander, Sigrid Damm-Rüger, Silvia Bovenschen or Florence Hervé have been all but forgotten. In the aforementioned master surveys, their names do not appear in the index, while Rudi Dutschke or Daniel Cohn-Bendit regularly do. These women are not even referenced in books more narrowly dedicated to the German Sixties.[21]

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[19] See the covers of, for example: Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Achtundsechzig: Eine Bilanz* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2008); Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Rüdiger Dammann, *1968: Die Revolte* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 2007); Norbert Frei, *1968: Jugendrevolte und globaler Protest* (Munich: DTV, 2008); Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009).

[20] Former activists report that they were addressed as "brides of the revolution" (Susanne Schunter-Kleemann), "accessories" (Gretchen Dutschke-Klotz) and as "the comrade's extended arm" (Annemarie Tröger). Qtd. in Ute Kätzel, ed., *Die 68erinnen: Porträt einer rebellischen Frauengeneration* (Berlin: Ulrike Helmer, 2008), 111; Gretchen Dutschke-Klotz, *Wir hatten ein barbarisches, schönes Leben: Rudi Dutschke: Eine Biographie* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1996), 81; Siegward Lönnendonker, ed., *Linksintellektueller Aufbruch zwischen "Kulturrevolution" und "kultureller Zerstörung": Der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund (SDS) in der Nachkriegsgeschichte 1946-1969* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 1998), 216.

[21] They are not listed in the index of Winkler, Wolfrum, Herbert, Wehler and Conze (see footnotes 5 to 9), and neither in Frei, *1968*, or Götz Aly's *Unser Kampf: 1968 - ein irritierter Blick zurück* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 2008).

A closer look will show that this gendered narrative of Sixties protest, to which we have become accustomed, is far from accurate. Ever since 1968, discourses on the revolt in the West German public have been fixated on male protagonists. Gendered myths developed around a male-defined "political generation" of "68ers," and around the supposed conflicts between Nazi fathers and antifascist sons. Thus, politically active women disappeared from the history of the Sixties. In fact, female "68ers" existed. Moreover, their long-term impact on the development of West German society was arguably larger than that of their male compatriots. Once we write women back into the story, the character of "1968," its role as a caesura of post-war German history, and the concept of the "'68er generation" need to be reevaluated.

The story of feminist activism in the late 1960s has been researched and thus only needs a brief recap.[22] It started at the universities with the most politicized women in the Socialist German Student League (SDS). About a quarter of students in 1968, and also a quarter of SDS members were female.[23] Female students experienced routine everyday discrimination at the university, often without being aware of it. Two to three times as many female than male students dropped out before the final exams. Eight out of ten professors were convinced that women attended university only to find a husband, a Bonn flyer claimed in 1969. Indeed, as late as 1960 a representative study of West German university professors had found 64 per cent of them principally or mostly opposed to women students, and 79 per cent to women professors.[24] As West German women still tended to marry and have their first child by their early to mid-twenties, an ill-timed pregnancy often spelt the end of a female student's academic career. Childcare facilities for under-threes were non-existent, for over-threes scarce, and only one in five young fathers helped out with childcare tasks.[25]

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[22] More in: Christina von Hodenberg, *Das andere Achtundsechzig: Gesellschaftsgeschichte einer Revolte* (Munich: Beck, 2018), ch. 5; Ute Kätzel, "Vorwort," in *Die 68erinnen*, 9-18; Schulz, *Der lange Atem der Provokation*; Elisabeth Zellmer, *Töchter der Revolte? Frauenbewegung und Feminismus der 1970er Jahre in München* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011).

[23] Florence Hervé, *Studentinnen in der BRD: Eine soziologische Untersuchung* (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1973), p. 20; Hagemann, "Gleichberechtigt?," 115; Andrea Wienhaus, *Bildungswege zu "1968": Eine Kollektivbiografie des Sozialistischen Deutschen Studentenbundes* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2014), 102 (for the SDS West Berlin).

[24] Hervé, *Studentinnen*, 82-83; leaflet of Bonn feminist group *Arbeitskreis Emanzipation*, October 1969, in: University Archive Bonn, Kl. Slg. 331, "Dokumentation arbeitskreis emanzipation." Hagemann, "Gleichberechtigt?," 116-17.

[25] Elisabeth Pfeil, *Die 23jährigen: Eine Generationenuntersuchung am Geburtenjahrgang 1941* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1968), 84-88; Sven Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft: Linksalternatives Leben in den Siebziger und frühen Achtziger Jahren* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2014), 722-45*;* Hervé, *Studentinnen*, 76-85.

The earliest protests by female "'68ers" grew out of the dissatisfaction with this situation. Disproportionately, it was mothers of small children who began to organize themselves and voice their concerns, such as Helke Sander, Sarah Haffner, Frigga Haug and Karin Adrian in West Berlin or Florence Hervé in Bonn.[26] Significantly, many female activists had a transnational background and experience with countries in which childcare was more readily available and career women were seen more favorably than in West Germany. Sander compared the situation with Finland, Haffner with Britain, Gretchen Dutschke-Klotz with the United States and Hervé with France.[27] Now, women gathered in informal reading groups (in West Berlin and Bonn since 1967, in Frankfurt since 1968) or women's communes (in Munich since 1968). Over time, these became organized interest groups such as the Berlin "Aktionsrat zur Befreiung der Frauen," the Frankfurt "Weiberrat" and the Bonn "Arbeitskreis Emanzipation." They wrote and circulated leaflets, initially aimed mainly at fellow female students. Many of these flyers called the machos of the New Left to task for their patronizing attitude towards the women who wanted to be part of political discussion and action.[28] A common complaint was that the men talked over the women's heads: "All the time there were intimidating remarks" (Elsa Rassbach), "the men often laughed" at women speaking (Gretchen Dutschke-Klotz), the SDS cultivated "repressive structures of communication" (Mona Steffen). From Cologne university, Beatrix Novy reported "this ubiquitous gap: the [male] comrades always talked very loud and very much, and the women very little."[29] The women's response was to opt for gender separatism and to organize themselves in female-only groups.

The unease at the patriarchal demeanor of the male activists did not stop there. The Frankfurt Weiberrat famously mocked their male comrades for their sexual conquests with a leaflet titled "Befreit die sozialistischen Eminenzen von ihren bürgerlichen Schwänzen" (Liberate the socialist bigwigs from their bourgeois cocks). In this much-cited but rare example, female "68ers" explicitly linked the sexism of SDS men to the pressures many women felt to comply with the demands of a male-

[26] Hodenberg, *Das andere Achtundsechzig*, 116-20.
[27] See Kätzel, ed., *Die 68erinnen*, 163-64, 282; author's interview with Florence Hervé on 18 May 2017.
[28] Lenz, *Die neue Frauenbewegung*, 50-59; University Archive Bonn, Kl. Slg. 331, „Dokumentation arbeitskreis emanzipation"; Zellmer, *Töchter der Revolte?*, 82-88.
[29] Rassbach and Dutschke-Klotz qtd. in Kätzel, ed., *Die 68erinnen*, 65-66, 281; Steffen on 24 November 1968 qtd. in Schulz, *Der lange Atem der Provokation*, 88; Novy qtd. in documentary, "Meine Geschichte – die 68er Generation," dir. Carsten Günther, broadcast on *Phoenix* 21 September 2008.

dominated sexual revolution.[30] Much more commonly, though, women activists protested not the men's sexual practices but their avoidance of family work and household chores. Even in the experimental hothouse of Berlin's Commune 1, female members complained about patriarchally flavored everyday interactions. In Dagmar Seehuber's words: "The patriarchal structure of society expressed itself particularly strongly in this commune ... That's because the men categorically denied that they themselves had to change. They had the theoretical blueprint but their actions were far from it."[31] From other communes, Karin Adrian reported tense weekly meetings with "the main issue being that once again nobody had done the cleaning," and Hedda Kuschel "noticed how often the men ducked household chores" in the Wieland commune.[32] Helke Sander who lived in a ten-room shared flat in West Berlin with her son, experienced incessant conflicts over mundane duties because "the idea of cleaning a toilet by themselves was unfathomable" to the men. This eventually led to the women locking the men into a room for a night until they promised to share the work better.[33]

A key text read by many feminists at the time was Karin Schrader-Klebert's essay "The cultural revolution of woman" in the June 1969 *Kursbuch,* which interpreted woman's role in the household as slavery and disenfranchisement. Household duties were now theoretically conceived of as instruments of the repression and intellectual stultification of women, as a ritual of daily humiliation and "material cult for the man [Kult der Dinge für den Mann]."[34] A flyer of a Berlin women's center stated: "We only achieved recognition where we are most constricted: in the household and family. Where we are locked into the two-to-three bedroom apartment in order constantly to polish it."[35]

The first event of the second feminist movement covered by several print media was a clash between men and women at a September 1968 SDS conference in

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[30] Flyer from November 1968 in Lenz, *Die neue Frauenbewegung*, 64-65.
[31] Dagmar Przytulla, nee Seehuber, qtd. in Kätzel, ed., *Die 68erinnen*, 218.
[32] Qtd. ibid., 246, 130.
[33] Sander qtd. in *Der Spiegel,* April 7, 2018, 47.
[34] Karin Schrader-Klebert, "Die kulturelle Revolution der Frau," *Kursbuch* 17 (1969), 1-46, here 10, 28-29.
[35] 1975 flyer qtd. in Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft*, 606. A similar flyer from 1971 in: Universitätsarchiv Bonn, Kl.Slg. 331, Dokumentation "arbeitskreis emanzipation." By 1976, unpaid domestic work became a major topic for the German feminist movement: Gisela Bock and Barbara Duden, „Arbeit aus Liebe - Liebe als Arbeit: Zur Entstehung der Hausarbeit im Kapitalismus," in *Frauen und Wissenschaft: Beiträge zur 1. Sommeruniversität für Frauen*, ed. Gruppe Berliner Dozentinnen (Berlin, 1977), 118–99.

Frankfurt, when Helke Sander delivered a brave speech attacking male students for taking part in "the social oppression of women in an individual way …, in the private sphere." Fellow SDS member Sigrid Damm-Rüger then threw tomatoes at the male delegates, who attempted to avoid any discussion of Sander's theses. *Konkret* columnist Ulrike Meinhof, herself a mother of twins trying to reconcile a journalistic career with family obligations, declared these tomatoes the harbinger of things to come: "The woman who threw tomatoes, and the woman who supplied the reasons for doing so … acted for countless women .... And they couldn't have cared less if what they had to say measured up to the usual theoretical level of discourse expected in the SDS ... The Berlin women who intervened in Frankfurt no longer want to cooperate. They bear the entire burden of raising children ... They no longer want to suffer insulting comments for not having a good education, or only a partial education, or not being able to work in their professions because they are raising children."[36]

One of the first decisions taken by the new women's groups in 1968 was to initiate self-governed *Kinderläden*. These new nurseries were meant to free up time for the mothers to study and be politically active, but also to champion a less authoritarian style of education. The model quickly spread across the country, with Kinderläden mushrooming everywhere. But during the first years of the new nurseries, leftist women and men fought over their control. The West Berlin "Aktionsrat zur Befreiung der Frauen" was challenged by a new "Zentralrat der sozialistischen Kinderläden" set up by young fathers who prioritized not the liberating effect of childcare on the mothers but rather the ideological experiment of raising a new generation of revolutionaries. The men wanted the children to be freed from the constraints of capitalism and bourgeois family values, and this theoretical zest made the nurseries "into a political project which demanded full-time commitment" instead of saving the women time (according to Helke Sander).[37] This gendered battle over Kinderläden mirrored a fundamental conflict within the New Left over revolutionary priorities: Most male rebels saw the plight of women as a *Nebenwiderspruch* (minor contradiction) which would automatically be resolved once the

[36] Ulrike Meinhof, "Die Frauen im SDS oder In eigener Sache," *konkret* 12 (1968), translated in: U.M., *Everybody Talks About the Weather. We Don't: The Writings of Ulrike Meinhof*, ed. Karin Bauer (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008), 209-11.

[37] Qtd. in Kätzel, ed., *Die 68erinnen*, p. 168. For *Kinderläden*, see Till van Rahden, "Eine Welt ohne Familie: Der Kinderladen als ein demokratisches Heilsversprechen," in *Autorität: Krise, Konstruktion und Konjunktur*, ed. Till van Rahden, Oliver Kohns and Martin Roussel (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2016), 255-82; Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft*, 728-81; Zellmer, *Töchter der Revolte?*, 68-78.

Hauptwiderspruch (major contradiction) had been eradicated, i.e. the campaign against capitalism had been won.[38] This was by no means the only internal battle in which female activists found themselves. From 1969 onwards, several painful splits developed within the feminist movement: between communist, socialist and reformist women, and between those who stressed biological gender difference and their adversaries.[39]

The politically active women of 1968 had gone through SDS schooling, and thus employed symbolic direct actions to attract media coverage. Remarkably, their actions often drew on elements from the female spheres of household and caring duties. Damm-Rüger threw tomatoes for a soup she was planning to make for supper. Annette Schwarzenau besmirched the walls of the editorial offices of the illustrated weekly *Stern* with the contents of soiled *Kinderladen* diapers and helped nurses protest against the bonnets they were ordered to cover their hair with. A group around Helke Sander in West Berlin incited Kindergarten teachers to strike. The West Berlin Commune 99 initiated a "children's demonstration" with balloons and Punch and Judy theatre.[40]

But while public actions by female "'68ers" were often playful and creative, their private struggles could be painfully mundane and repetitive. Women's demands for a rapid change in everyday gendered habits were bound to meet with resistance by their partners, because most men of the "'68er" generation had grown up with a sense of entitlement. In three quarters of all families with multiple children born around 1940, boys had to help much less in the house than girls. This was a male privilege that almost all the boys but only half the girls perceived to be "natural."[41] In this age cohort, gendered battles over cleaning, grocery shopping and childcare were now fought out well beyond the walls of communes. While a survey from 1964 reported that young women did nine tenths or more of all household chores in 93 percent of all cases,[42] the nagging by women (and cooperation by men) began slowly to change the situation over the course of the next decades.

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[38] For examples, see Lönnendonker, ed., *Linksintellektueller Aufbruch*, 209, 214, 231.
[39] See Frigga Haug in Kätzel, ed., *Die 68erinnen*, 192-93; Schulz, *Der lange Atem der Provokation*, 93-96, 149-50; Rosemarie Nave-Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung in Deutschland* (Opladen: Leske and Budrich, 1982), 56-58.
[40] Kätzel, ed., *Die 68erinnen*, 48-49, 51-54, 171-72; *Der Spiegel*, June 9, 1969, 85.
[41] Pfeil, *Die 23jährigen*, 82. West German girls of these age cohorts often felt their brothers were treated preferentially: Lu Seegers, *Vati blieb im Krieg: Vaterlosigkeit als generationelle Erfahrung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2013), 196.
[42] Pfeil, *Die 23jährigen*, 83-84.

The private activism of female "'68ers" challenged their partners and husbands. This campaign in the home, together with a certain disdain for the bourgeois institution of monogamy and the limited availability of state-sponsored child care, resulted in many relationships tail-spinning into crisis. A contemporary sociologist spoke of the common "experiences of failure" and the "high psychological costs" paid by "all those involved in the feminist movement."[43] In the urban alternative milieus of the 1970s, where feminism had made significant inroads, heterosexual relationships were typically referred to as "*Beziehungskisten*" (meaning relationships under construction). They were experienced as besieged by all kinds of problems, and variously characterized as "relationship prisons," "daily petty wars" and "crisis carousels."[44] Many "68ers" of both genders rejected the institution of marriage not just for its bourgeois flavor, but also because it was a pillar of patriarchy. A 1969 report about the Berlin *Kinderladen* founded by Commune 2 stated: "Without exception, all nuclear families involved in the *Kinderladen* project experienced strong tensions between the married partners from the outset. During our cooperation in the *Kinderladen*, actually, everyone realized that these marriages were unsustainable."[45] A peek into one marriage shows why.

Regine Walter-Lehmann was an activist in the West Berlin feminist movement of the 1970s and later became an editor of *tageszeitung*. As a student, she had married Joachim Lehmann; both were active in the New Left. While in the beginning of their relationship, she had typed her husband's final thesis, she soon saw in him "the sluggish object of a re-education offensive concerning children, kitchen and cleaning duties" and subjected him (in his words) to "disputes at the kitchen table, lasting into the early morning hours, about female and male patterns of perception, thought and writing," disputes "which could never be resolved." After the birth of a daughter, Joachim had urged Regine to quit an intellectually exciting, but poorly paid job as assistant dramaturg at a theatre. Regine complied, but now experienced the family flat as a "prison" and wrote in her diary: "I will never forgive myself for giving up such a coveted job which I loved so dearly. It eats and eats away at me … Instead I played at wife gone wild and got myself into an extramarital affair. Typical,

[43] Nave-Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung*, 80.
[44] [„Beziehungsknast", „Krisenkarussell", „täglicher Kleinkrieg"]: Sven Reichardt, "Von 'Beziehungskisten' und 'offener Sexualität,'" in *Das alternative Milieu: Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968-1983*, ed. S.R. and Detlef Siegfried (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010), 267-89, here 267-68, 280.
[45] Kommune 2, "Kindererziehung in der Kommune," *Kursbuch* 17, June 1969, 147-78, here 174.

unfortunately. And bloody stupid, too." Although she loved her husband, she simply could not overcome her opposition to "this *Klein-Family-Life* … it makes me sick … Daughter gets to the heart of it: she formulates her wishes in a provocatively conservative way. Mommy, Daddy, Child, all together! Of course, she senses my tendency to abscond and is aggressive and anxious. If that continues for a few years, I won't exist any longer. I have to do something new, something different!" To break out of "this old-fashioned wifely perspective" which she "had never wanted," Regine eventually moved out of the family flat, took up a new job and became a "three-day mum" to her daughter for several years. While Regine noted how "wretched" she felt to tell her daughter that she "would share the fate of her many comrades in the *Schülerladen* who have a four-day mum and a three-day dad," she did not see an alternative. In the milieu the Lehmanns belonged to, their separation was by no means unusual. In the *Kinderladen* her daughter had attended, only two children were raised by parents who lived together.[46]

Walter-Lehmann's actions were a protest against the traditional gender norms she felt confined by. Emancipatory battles like hers played out in the private realm and thus were less visible in the public sphere. Whilst the new feminist movement enriched politics by making the private political, the far-reaching impact of women's private struggles remained consistently under-represented in contemporary debates. There was a deep-seated expectation that revolutions could only take place in public, and that revolutionaries could only be male. The police, for example, typically released female protesters immediately. When Dagmar Seehuber was arrested alongside other members of the Commune 1 for having planned the infamous "pudding assassination" against the U.S. vice president Hubert Humphrey (who was to visit West Berlin in April 1967), the officer checking her papers told her: "The women can all go home." Similarly, Gretchen Dutschke-Klotz was once freed from prison after having been arrested at a demonstration together with Rudi. She was sent home with the explicit order to bring in food for her husband in his cell.[47]

[46] Joachim Lehmann, "Matriarchat, nicht Proletariat! Ein Rückblick auf die feminische Revolte der siebziger Jahre," in *Weiblichkeit als politisches Programm? Sexualität, Macht und Mythos*, ed. Bettina Gruber, Heinz-Peter Preußer and Udo Franke-Penski (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 2005), 40-50, here 41-45.
[47] Przytulla, nee Seehuber, qtd. in Kätzel, ed., *Die 68erinnen*, 207. Dutschke-Klotz qtd. ibid., 286.

Female activists were perceived mainly as "tarts *[Bräute]* of the revolt" – this was the epithet media reporters and editors often used to belittle the women.[48] *Der Spiegel* mocked the "sleep-deprived brides of the revolution" who took the pill, wore eye shadow and carried tampons in their purses.[49] Contemporary television channels did not screen footage of Sander's speech and the subsequent tomato toss from 1968, as the event's significance was not recognized. Instead, much media attention centered on sexualized images of women in the movement. Uschi Obermaier, a model who temporarily joined Rainer Langhans in the Commune 1, became the pin-up of the revolt. She posed bare-breasted for the cover of the illustrated weekly *Stern* and made headlines with her affairs with rock musicians. Thus, the most well-known woman of the German student movement was anything but a feminist.[50]

Unlike Uschi Obermaier, the activists who took part in the first women's groups and anti-authoritarian nurseries normally shied away from the limelight. In keeping with the gender norms they had been socialized with, prioritizing collective needs over their own interests, they habitually downplayed their historical role in starting the second feminist movement. At a commemorative panel discussion 20 years later, the female protagonists confessed how uncomfortable they felt on stage. Sigrid Damm-Rüger, who had famously thrown the tomatoes, argued against any public commemoration of that event and of the feminist movement (her own daughter only learned about the tomato incident at her mother's funeral in 1995). One of the co-founders of the Frankfurt Weiberrat, Silvia Bovenschen, admitted "a strong tendency to flee" whenever asked to testify in public. Feminist journalist and SDS member Sibylle Plogstedt commented on the self-effacing manner of her fellow campaigners: "There never even was an attempt of the old SDS women to meet and try to work through our own history … The women did not formulate an interest in presenting their history, and the media did not show any interest in women either."[51]

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[48] Such as photographer Michael Ruetz. See Ingo Cornils, *Writing the Revolution: The Construction of "1968" in Germany* (Rochester: Camden House, 2016), 140.
[49] *Der Spiegel*, Nov. 24, 1968, 60-62.
[50] Uschi Obermaier and Olaf Kraemer, *High times: mein wildes Leben* (Munich: Heyne, 2008); Cornils, *Writing the Revolution*, 141-45.
[51] All qtd. in Halina Bendkowski, ed., "Antiautoritärer Anspruch und Frauenemanzipation: Die Revolte in der Revolte," Ringvorlesung 1 June 1988, transcript at http://www.infopartisan.net/archive/1968/29708.html (accessed March 22, 2017). Cf. Dorothee Damm, "Meine Mutter, die 68erin," in *Wie weit flog die Tomate? Eine 68erinnen-Gala der Reflexion*, ed. Halina Bendkowski (Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 1999), 25-29, here 25.

If the media largely bypassed the story of female "'68ers," so did mainstream historians. To be sure, there were books on the history of the (first and second) feminist movement which were written, printed and distributed within the confines of the feminist counter-public during the 1970s and 1980s. These niche publications could be astonishingly successful with female audiences. Some of these contributions were penned by communist or New Left feminists such as Florence Hervé or Jutta Menschik, whose undergraduate dissertation (*Diplomarbeit*) on female emancipation sold 32,000 copies in 1971-72 alone. Others were literary works, such as Erika Runge's interview collection *Frauen: Versuche zur Emanzipation* which sold 66,000 copies between 1969 and 1978, or adult education books such as Rosemarie Nave-Herz' *Geschichte der Frauenbewegung in Deutschland* of which five editions were distributed by the *Landeszentralen für politische Bildung* from 1981 to 1997, every new edition running out of print quickly.[52] From the late 1970s, influential scholarly works on women's history followed.[53] Through these and other publications, the movement armed itself with feminist ideas and became aware of the long history that had preceded the activism of the late 1960s. Initially, by 1968, historical literature on the women's movement had still been hard to come by, as Berlin SDS member Sibylle Plogstedt recalled: "Books on the women's movement, there were hardly any, you could carry them around with you in a small box if you were to set up a book table." Even the women of the Frankfurt Weiberrat had not been aware of the nuances of patriarchal repression or the term sexism. Silvia Bovenschen explained, "we weren't equipped particularly well … The bourgeois feminist movement was very repressed and forgotten … and we did not have a theory of feminism."[54] Over time, the diffusion of feminist ideas, taken from international and national sources, made a key difference.[55]

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[52] Florence Hervé, ed., *Brot und Rosen: Geschichte und Perspektiven der demokratischen Frauenbewegung* (Frankfurt a.M.: Marxistische Blätter, 1979); F.H., *Geschichte der deutschen Frauenbewegung* (Köln: PapyRossa, 1982); Jutta Menschik, *Gleichberechtigung oder Emanzipation? Die Frau im Erwerbsleben der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 2nd ed. 1972); Erika Runge, *Frauen: Versuche zur Emanzipation* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 7th ed. 1978); Nave-Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung*, 5th ed. 1997, 7.

[53] Summarized by Belinda Davis, "The Personal is Political: Gender, Politics and Political Activism in Modern German History," in *Gendering Modern German History*, ed. Hagemann and Quataert, 107-127.

[54] Qtd. in Bendkowski, ed., "Antiautoritärer Anspruch."

[55] The comparison with the Soviet Union points to the key role of feminist ideas. There, women achieved full equality in the labour market but no feminist discourse developed. As a consequence, gender inequality largely persisted. See Sarah Ashwin, "Women and the Transition from Communism: Between a Rock and a Hard Place," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 71 (1993): 712-16.

Outside the bubble of the women's movement, historians and newspaper contributors largely reproduced a male narrative in their renditions of the German 1968. Since the late 1970s, male SDS veterans had begun to spin a myth. In the press, they elevated themselves to a political generation which had more or less single-handedly democratized the Federal Republic from below and broken the stranglehold of their Nazi fathers.[56] Increasingly, the student unrest of the Sixties was now understood as a duel of two male age cohorts, taking up a popular pattern of interpretation devised by Karl Mannheim in 1928. Mannheim's concept of political generations is gendered in the way it relies on educated male youth being socialized in war or in youth leagues and then seeking to make their mark in the political public sphere, battling each other intellectually. This model of generational formation is difficult to apply to women, whose biographies and experiences are different. "Political generations" are therefore automatically assumed to be masculine.[57]

In the case of West Germany, much of the historiography sees a masculine generational conflict, overshadowed by "the crimes of the fathers," at the heart of the revolt of 1968. Norbert Frei contends that the young assaulted the "silent patriarchs" of "the Nazi elites." The "'68ers", born in the 1940s, were rootless "children of repression" who became estranged from their silent parents and formed a generation "in the spirit of their criticism of the Nazi past." Their actions were always "a moral protest against the guilt of the fathers."[58] Eckart Conze likewise asserts that the young "were morally outraged about the older generations, about their fathers, yes their grandfathers" and caused "conflicts reaching right into the families."[59] "Many of the men and women born in Germany during the war and immediate post-war years never knew their fathers: who they were, what they had done," muses Tony Judt and therefore explains the revolt from the clash with the fathers: "If there ever was a generation whose rebellion really was grounded in the rejection of everything their parents represented – *everything:* national pride, Nazism, money, the West, peace,

[56] Axel Schildt speaks of a generation deriving its identity from the press ["Generation am Tropf des Feuilletons"]. "Überbewertet? Zur Macht objektiver Entwicklungen und zur Wirkungslosigkeit der ‚68er'," in *Reform und Revolte: politischer und gesellschaftlicher Wandel in der Bundesrepublik vor und nach 1968*, ed. Udo Wengst (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011), pp. 89-102, here 93.
[57] Christina Benninghaus, "Das Geschlecht der Generation: Zum Zusammenhang von Generationalität und Männlichkeit um 1930," in *Generationen: Zur Relevanz eines wissenschaftlichen Grundbegriffs*, ed. Ulrike Jureit and Michael Wildt (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005), 127-58. See also Ulrike Jureit, *Generationenforschung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2006).
[58] Frei, *1968*, 78-80, 84, 87, 222.
[59] Conze, *Die Suche nach Sicherheit*, 337.

stability, law and democracy – it was 'Hitler's children,' the West German radicals of the Sixties."[60] Often, a socio-psychological argument is employed. The inter-generational conflicts allegedly escalated because of the parents' emotional coldness and inability to talk about the past. "The price to be paid ... was the generational rebellion of '1968.' The radicalism exhibited then was the result of the psychological damage caused by the intergenerational transfer of the psychological legacy of Nazism."[61] The "'68ers" were "a generation of emotionally freezing children" whose "key problem" was "a lack of nest warmth."[62]

To substantiate such claims, historians often turn to autobiographies and literary texts by well-known male protesters, such as Bernward Vesper (son of Nazi poet Will Vesper and husband of terrorist Gudrun Ensslin), K.D. Wolff (chairman of the West German SDS in 1968), and Hannes Heer (head of Bonn's SDS and later a leading member of the Wehrmacht exhibition team). Vesper, Wolff and Heer publicly maintained they had turned into rebels because of their Nazi fathers' refusal to talk about their past.[63] Through extensive media coverage, these isolated cases over time morphed into a generalized generational narrative. "'68ers" who were interviewed decades after the fact typically resorted to the trope of falling out with their fathers who were described as having been fellow travellers or perpetrators. A few historians took this generational narrative of the "'68ers" at face value, basing their argument on uncritical analysis of oral history sources.[64] But it has been established that in fact, most left-wing protesters "did not come from families with a right-wing or particularly conservative outlook." A team which conducted nearly 500 interviews with former activists across Europe between 2007 and 2011 concluded: "However firmly the notion of generational conflict may be established in popular memory, many activists – in Germany and elsewhere – did not experience such a political

[60] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: William Heinemann, 2005), 417. See also Hartmut Kaelble, *Sozialgeschichte Europas: 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Beck, 2007), 34; Wienhaus, *Bildungswege zu 1968*, 38-42.
[61] A. Dirk Moses, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 69.
[62] Aly, *Unser Kampf*, 196, 189.
[63] See the 1977 novel by Bernward Vesper, *Die Reise* (Erfstadt: Area, 2005). For Wolff, see Piotr Oseka, Polymeris Voglis and Anna von der Goltz, "Families," in *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt*, ed. Robert Gildea, James Mark and Anette Warring (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 46-71, here 50. For Heer, see Hodenberg, *Das andere Achtundsechzig*, 45-52.
[64] Such as: Thomas A. Kohut, *A German Generation: An Experiential History of the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 3-4, 7-8. Karin Wetterau, *68: Täterkinder und Rebellen: Familienroman einer Revolte* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2017), 11-12; Hans Kundnani, *Utopia or Auschwitz: Germany's 1968 Generation and the Holocaust* (London: Hurst, 2009).

conflict within their own families."[65] The "'68ers" only staged the genealogical clash, argues Ulrike Jureit: Long after the fact, and in marked contrast to historical reality, they constructed topoi such as emotionally cold parents and the "Auschwitz shock" to allow for a heroic generational narrative.[66] The same case was made for the Italian "'68ers" who, according to ex-activist and historian Luisa Passerini, "chose to be orphans" by overemphasizing generational tensions in their family.[67]

Such "late oedipal scenarios" of paternal repression, to quote Claus Leggewie,[68] were also widespread in fictional literature. Since the early 1970s, the new genre of *Väterliteratur* explored the traumatic consequences this type of conflict left on the young generation in West Germany. It was mainly young male authors who bewailed the silence, the guilt, but also the traumatic loss of their Nazi fathers in novels and plays.[69] This genre reprises old literary tropes going back centuries.[70]

There are several problems with this *Don Carlos* myth. It understands the young as active and the old as passive. It takes for granted that the Nazi past was at the core of generational conflict. It wrongly implies that generational conflict was a widespread reality in the families of the Sixties. It also tends to resort to collective psychology and to conflate political generations with familial generations. I have shown elsewhere that it was common for "'68ers" to join in the selective silence with which the Nazi past was treated in West German families. Intergenerational conflict within Sixties families was less frequent and less virulent than often assumed, and it was not normally tied to Nazi legacies.[71] Here, I will concentrate on the gender aspect of the myth. The generational version of events, obsessed as it is with fathers, disregards female experience and agency. It also leads to an overemphasis on generational conflict in the historical narrative, thereby underrepresenting the

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[65] Oseka, Voglis and von der Goltz, "Families," 51.
[66] Jureit, *Generationenforschung*, pp. 92, 119-20. Similar: Kurt Lüscher and Ludwig Liegle, *Generationenbeziehungen in Familie und Gesellschaft* (Konstanz: UVK, 2003), 29-30, 251-52.
[67] Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy, 1968* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 27. See also: Joseph Maslen, "Autobiographies of a Generation? Carolyn Steedman, Luisa Passerini and the Memory of 1968," *Memory Studies* 6 (2013): 23-36, here 30.
[68] Claus Leggewie, "A Laboratory of Postindustrial Society: Reassessing the 1960s in Germany," in *1968: The World Transformed*, ed. Philipp Gassert, Carole Fink, and Detlef Junker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 277-94, here 281.
[69] For example novels by Peter Schneider, Günter Kunert, Peter Härtling or Niklas Frank. Hannes Heer, "Literatur und Erinnerung: Die Nazizeit als Familiengeheimnis," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 53 (2005): 809-35; Seegers, *Vati blieb im Krieg*, 20-21.
[70] Domenica Tölle, *Altern in Deutschland 1815-1933: Eine Kulturgeschichte* (Grafschaft: Vektor, 1996).
[71] Hodenberg, *Das andere Achtundsechzig*, ch. 3.

virulence of gender conflict within the younger age cohort and leaving relations between daughters and parents underexplored.

For if we investigate relations between mothers and daughters in Sixties families – a topic which needs more research –, all indications point to arrangements that mostly avoided open conflict and at times included mutual support in conflicts with fathers and grandfathers. While the mothers were no longer role models whose life scripts could easily be copied, many remained close confidantes. In contemporary polls, a third of 23-year-old women named their mothers as the go-to-person they trusted most, and another fifth named both parents. Four out of five young people described their mothers as "approachable" and "emotionally positive." The percentage was highest in academic, white-collar and civil servant families.[72] These findings contradict today's stereotype of "Hitler's willing mothers" (Sabine Bode) who allegedly ruled over their 68er offspring as cold and heartless disciplinarians, traumatizing them in the process.[73] During the summer of 1968, psychologists interviewed 39 mothers between 35 and 56 years of age in the Cologne-Bonn region. Most mothers saw their teenage or adult daughters as partners: They mutually negotiated many everyday decisions, from miniskirts to parties, and crucially helped them attain higher education and choose their vocation freely. Often, mothers who felt that their own educational chances and career options had been stymied helped their daughters to achieve the high school leaving certificate (*Abitur*) and even go to university, against the reservations of fathers.[74]

Still, many female "'68ers" mainly conceived of their mothers as depressed housewives who were dominated by their husbands. Mechtild Düsing, then a student in Münster, stated: "We no longer wanted to be like our own mothers who had only lived for the man ... The own mother, that was the horror image!"[75] Like Helke

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[72] Pfeil, *Die 23jährigen*, 111-13, 136; similar findings from 1964 in: Viggo Graf Blücher, *Die Generation der Unbefangenen: Zur Soziologie der jungen Menschen heute* (Düsseldorf: Diederichs, 1966), 102.

[73] Sabine Bode, *Die vergessene Generation: Die Kriegskinder brechen ihr Schweigen* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2016), 149; see also Barbara Stambolis, *Töchter ohne Väter: Frauen der Kriegsgeneration und ihre lebenslange Sehnsucht* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2012), 87-89; Barbara Stambolis, *Aufgewachsen in "eiserner Zeit": Kriegskinder zwischen Erstem Weltkrieg und Weltwirtschaftskrise* (Giessen: Psychosozial, 2014), 136.

[74] The project was led by Helga M. Merker and the transcripts survived in the BOLSA archive, Historisches Datenzentrum Halle: Hodenberg, *Das andere Achtundsechzig*, 132-141.

[75] Qtd. in documentary, "68er an Rhein, Ruhr und Weser," dir. Carsten Günther, broadcast on *Westdeutscher Rundfunk,* 9 and 16 May 2008. See also activists Elke Regehr, Sigrid Fronius, Sarah Haffner, Helke Sander and Elsa Rassbach in Kätzel, ed., *Die 68erinnen*, 99, 27, 21, 141-42, 161, 62, 96.

Sander of the Berlin *Aktionsrat* who called the mothers "eerily ... subservient," many feminist activists criticized the ritualized humility and apolitical stance of older women. "Doing it differently from your mother" became a rallying cry with which young feminists publicly vowed to no longer be dominated by marriage and family. For example, the author Erika Runge (born 1939) embarked on her successful interview project with life histories of 17 German women because "I needed role models. My mother couldn't be one for me, I didn't want to live like her."[76] In public, therefore, the female "'68ers" delineated themselves clearly from their mothers, whom they characterized as apolitical, submissive, de-personalized housewives (but not as Nazis). However, a closer look at the biographies of mothers and daughters shows that in reality, change was more gradual than radical. Women who were born around 1940 tended to live a phased life model in which periods of employment came before and after child-rearing – just like their mothers. But the younger generation was better at theorizing and publicly defending their career phases as motivated by individual choices. In contrast, the mothers often veiled periods of paid employment as necessary contributions to the family collective – because they did not want to challenge the traditional marriage model.[77] Overall, most middle-aged women of the Sixties were somewhat less patriarchally minded than the grandmothers' generation and maintained close relationships with their daughters. In private, then, generational conflict between female "'68ers" and their mothers was much less pronounced than in public statements, with the mothers' or grandmothers' Nazi past hardly ever being addressed.

Although our picture of the relationship between mothers and daughters is still sketchy,[78] the addition of gender changes the established narrative of "1968." Within families and in the private sphere, gender conflict seems to have been at least as prominent, and possibly more so, than generational conflict. This has repercussions for our understanding of what the Sixties protest movement achieved in the long term, and what defines the political generation of the "'68ers."

The generational belonging of male and female "'68ers" was defined in different ways. Many men who were born in the 1940s and early 1950s began to feel

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[76] Sander qtd. in Silies, *Liebe, Lust und Last*, 343. See also ibid., 340-41; Kätzel, ed., *Die 68erinnen*, pp. 202, 243, 255; Runge, *Frauen*, 271.
[77] Thon, *Frauenbewegung im Wandel*, 260-61, 279, 413-17.
[78] Cf. Lerke Gravenhorst and Carmen Tatschmurat, ed., *Töchter-Fragen: NS-Frauen-Geschichte* (Freiburg: Kore, 1990).

a part of this generation when, years after the events, they actively or passively took part in mass media debates about the role of their age cohort in the history of the republic. Female "'68ers" did not communicate to the same extent in public about their historical role and biographic commonalities. What bound these women together, beyond having been born in the same decade, was not the "narrated generational experience" but "silent" generational experiences: direct, life-changing experiences such as the contraceptive pill (as argued by Eva Maria Silies[79]), women's groups, or battles with male partners over chores, childcare and career choices. This concept of a "silent" generation differs from the established Mannheimian pattern of political generations in several ways. It allows for formative experiences in the private sphere, it is not restricted to the educated elites, and is not as dependent on mediated discourses. These features enable us to extend the concept to include women, and thus to define the "'68ers" as a generation of both genders.

It has almost become a truism among historians that the protest movement "failed politically but succeeded culturally"[80] – that it could not incite a socialist revolution, but set into motion a lifestyle revolution which over the long term changed the republic beyond recognition. In concluding his account of the Sixties, for example, Norbert Frei argues that a sea change of "the face and the mentality of the republic" was the protesters' lasting achievement. In Frei's words, "From now on, it was not exactly ubiquitous but certainly possible to witness in a Swabian village a skilled worker with slightly longer hair pushing along a pram, his female partner not being present – and likewise a young female secretary from a Hessian town holidaying in Spain on her own." Frei's examples are taken from the private sphere and are about "doing gender:" about the myriad ways in which men and women express and negotiate their gender identities. Nevertheless, Frei's book devotes very little space to gender conflict and negotiation.[81] If we subscribe to the argument of political failure and cultural success, we should acknowledge that "cultural" in this instance largely means "gendered," and that it is the female "'68ers" who should

[79] Silies, *Liebe, Lust und Last*, 427. For the process of male narrated generational belonging, see Benjamin Möckel, *Erfahrungsbruch und Generationsbehauptung: Die "Kriegsjugendgeneration" in den beiden deutschen Nachkriegsgesellschaften* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014).
[80] Cf. Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, "Einleitung," in *"1968" - eine Wahrnehmungsrevolution? Horizont-Verschiebungen des Politischen in den 1960er und 1970 Jahren*, ed. I.G. (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2013), 7.
[81] Frei, *1968,* 228. See Candace West and Don H. Zimmermann, "Doing Gender," *Gender and Society* 1 (1987): 125-151; special issue of journal *Gender and Society* 23 (1), 2009.

mainly be credited with bringing about this lifestyle revolution. If the most fundamental consequences of the Sixties revolt were changes to the way West Germans "did gender," then it was, for the most part, the female long march through the marriages and families of the republic which brought about change. It was the anti-patriarchal thrust of the protest movement that formed its essential legacy; it chimed well with the movement's overarching anti-authoritarianism.

When we widen our perspective beyond Germany, we can detect the first stirrings of a gender-aware reassessment of the history of Sixties. Looking at North and Latin America, Japan and Western Europe, Sara M. Evans has recently argued that "gender insurgency was a central component of the rebellions of men as well as women across the globe." She, too, stresses "that feminism and dramatic challenges to gender relations were among the primary legacies of the activism of the '1968 generation,'" even if most historiography still gives "short shrift to women." The journal *L'Homme* also ran a special issue highlighting the absence of the category gender in the scholarship on "1968" in the Dutch, Austrian, Swiss, German and Eastern European settings.[82] And historians of the French May have begun to attack the way the events have been reduced to a Parisian story of educated, leftist elites, bypassing the workers, the masses and the provinces (but without primarily focusing on gender).[83]

It seems that a re-assessment of the historical importance of post-war female activism is on the international agenda. But the fiftieth anniversary of "1968" has led to contentious discussion in Germany. Responding to my book which highlights the role of women in the late 1960s, historians Wolfgang Kraushaar and Axel Schildt deny that the West German second feminist movement was sparked in 1968. Kraushaar concedes that "the female side was underexposed in historiography to date" but attacks what he sees as an attempt to rewrite the student movement as "a

[82] Sara M. Evans, "Sons, Daughters, and Patriarchy: Gender and the 1968 Generation," *The American Historical Review* 114 (2009): 331-47, here 331-32. In Italy, following Luisa Passerini's works, historians began to pay attention to female agency somewhat earlier. See most recently: Maud A. Bracke, *Women and the Reinvention of the Political: Feminism in Italy, 1968-1983* (New York: Routledge, 2014) and "'Women's 1968 Is Not Yet Over:' The Capture of Speech and the Gendering of 1968 in Europe," *The American Historical Review* 123 (2018): 753-57; Fiammetta Balestracci, "The Influence of American Sexual Studies on the 'Sexual Revolution' of Italian Women," in *Children by Choice? Twentieth Century Value Changes in Human Reproduction and Family Planning*, ed. Ann-Katrin Gembries, Isabel Heinemann and Theresia Theuke (Munich: de Gruyter, 2018), 145-61. *L'homme* 20 (2), 2009.

[83] Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, *Le moment 68: Une histoire contestee* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2008); Julian Jackson, "The Mystery of May 1968," *French Historical Studies* (2010): 625-53.

female students" movement ['Studentinnenbewegung']. He argues: "The new women's movement only formed in 1971 in the context of the anti-abortion campaign ... Beforehand, there were only tiny groups and circles, but no movement in the true sense of the word [im eigentlichen Sinne]." Schildt similarly acknowledges that "there was doubtless a marginalization of the female part of the revolt in public perception," but criticizes "the backdating of the genesis of a new women's movement" and the inclusion of "the SDS-heroines' 'tomato tosses' which have already been cited to death."[84] In trying to shift the women's movement into the 1970s, and therefore to keep "1968" assigned to male protagonists, Kraushaar and Schildt unintentionally reproduce the view of contemporary male New Leftists who saw women's struggle for equality as the "minor contradiction." They also reprise Alice Schwarzer's version of history. Schwarzer maintains that the second feminist movement began only with the 1971 anti-abortion campaign which she herself had initiated as a young journalist. For her, the late 1960s women's groups were but a "deceptive illusion [trügerischer Schein]" and "premature spring [Vorfrühling] of the women's movement" as they allegedly never left the "student ghetto."[85] It is true that during the 1970s, the West German feminist movement grew massively and became less socially exclusive and heteronormative. Its public protests and media coverage multiplied, and it added a new emphasis on women's bodily and sexual autonomy. Nevertheless, in 1968 the key elements of the second wave of the women's movement were already present. Female "'68ers" found their voice as political actors; they practiced the protest forms of symbolic and direct action; they argued that the private was political; they organized in informal, gender-separatist groups; they founded anti-authoritarian nurseries. There are also significant personal continuities between the female activism of 1968 and the 1970s. For example, Helke Sander whose speech had enraged SDS machos in 1968 was active in the Berlin women's group *Brot und Rosen* and the campaign against the pill during the 1970s. Sarah Haffner reappeared in 1976 when she initiated the first safe house for battered women (in Berlin). Several women

[84] Wolfgang Kraushaar, "Umso schlimmer für die Tatsachen," *Süddeutsche Zeitung,* April 25, 2018, 9. Axel Schildt, review in *Sehepunkte* 18 (2018), http://www.sehepunkte.de/2018/05/31368.html. For media coverage of the debate, see *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* April 30, 2018, 9 (Christian Geyer, "Wie weiblich war 1968?").

[85] Qtd. in Schulz, *Der lange Atem der Provokation*, 187. Editorial "über uns," *EMMA* 3 (2018), 4; ibid., 84-88 (Chantal Louis, "Die 68erinnen"). See also Imke Schmincke, "Von der Politisierung des Privatlebens zum neuen Frauenbewusstsein: Körperpolitik und Subjektivierung von Weiblichkeit in der neuen Frauenbewegung Westdeutschlands," in *Zeitgeschichte als Geschlechtergeschichte*, ed. Paulus, Silies and Wolff, 297-317.

from early Berlin women's groups participated in the first salvo of Schwarzer's anti-abortion campaign in the weekly *Stern* in 1971 where they confessed, "I had an abortion."[86] Why put up a fence between "1968" and the women's movement of the 1970s?

The example of "1968" shows that historians could integrate female agency into the master narratives of contemporary history in many ways. Publications in post-1945 women's and gender history are too often considered "niche" and need to play a greater role in master surveys. Areas with "feminine" connotations deserve more attention by mainstream historians, particularly conflicts and changes in the private sphere and the family, which were entwined with politics and wider society. Historians could also focus more intently on "doing gender" and how it changed over time. They could resist buying into contemporary gendered dichotomies such as a feminized "cultural" versus a masculine "political" realm – recognizing that changes in the so-called cultural sphere were often political and impactful. The tendency to narrate contemporary history as a duel of political generations (of '45ers' and '68ers', possibly with '33ers' added in[87]) needs to be recognized as an inherently male perspective. In addition, we lack studies on middle-aged and elderly women, conservative and Christian women as well as working-class women; these groups are largely invisible in contemporary historiography.[88] Furthermore, the Federal Republic's commemorative culture appears gendered, privileging male recollections. Local and regional oral history projects and exhibitions need to represent women's voices and women's activism alongside men's more fully. So far, interview collections and exhibition catalogues on late Sixties protest underrepresent women, and rarely ask their subjects about clashes and negotiations over gender. Typical examples are a Bonn and a Berlin project carried out for the fortieth anniversary of "1968."[89]

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[86] For Sander and Haffner: Kätzel, ed., *Die 68erinnen*, 157, 175-77; for the *Stern* action: Frigga Haug ibid., 193. See also Schulz, *Der lange Atem der Provokation*, 149; Ilse Lenz, "Das Private ist politisch? Zum Verhältnis von Frauenbewegung und alternativem Milieu," in *Das alternative Milieu: antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968 - 1983*, ed. S. Reichardt and D. Siegfried (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010), 375–404.

[87] See for example, Aly, *Unser Kampf*; Moses, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past*; Christina von Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise: Eine Geschichte der westdeutschen Medienöffentlichkeit 1945-1973* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006).

[88] An exception is Vera Neumann, *Nicht der Rede wert: Die Privatisierung der Kriegsfolgen in der frühen Bundesrepublik: Lebensgeschichtliche Erinnerungen* (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 1999).

[89] The Bonn project ran in 2005/06, see: Horst-Pierre Bothien, *Protest und Provokation: Bonner*

Lastly, master narratives of the Federal Republic that measure success against ideals of Western democracy could rethink how the struggle against patriarchal structures and gender inequality relates to their overarching argument. To what extent did post-war processes of "Westernization" and "liberalization" rely on, advance or reduce male domination? How does the emancipation of women, as a century-long, continuous but uneven process peaking between roughly 1968 and the early 1980s, impact the periodization of post-1945 West German history? So far, the long Sixties, spanning from the last third of the 1950s to about 1973, have often figured as a decade of dynamic change, experimentation crisis and grass-roots democratization during which the face of the republic was transformed. The Seventies that followed have been framed as an era of structural rupture, when economy, labor, science and intellectual debates adjusted to new conditions "after the boom." Both the debates about the character of the long Sixties and the era "after the boom" could benefit from a more meaningful inclusion of patriarchal continuities and feminist agency in twentieth-century history.[90] We need to overcome the compartmentalization of women's and gender history in writing the story of the Federal Republic. Only then can we assess its "success" and its relationship to the West more fully.

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Studenten 1967/1968 (Essen: Klartext, 2007). This exhibition omitted mention of the *Arbeitskreis Emanzipation*, and of 21 interviewees only three were women. Likewise, the exhibition "68 – Brennpunkt Berlin" by the *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung* in 2008 overlooked the *Aktionsrat* and the *Kinderläden*. A counter-project, focused on female interviewees, was run by Ute Kätzel since 1998: *Die 68erinnen*, ed. U.K., p. ii. For the role of women in commemorative culture, see also Elizabeth Heineman, "The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," *American Historical Review* 101 (1996), no. 2: 354-95.

[90] Cf. Julia Paulus, Eva-Maria Silies and Kerstin Wolff, "Die Bundesrepublik aus geschlechterhistorischer Perspektive," in *Zeitgeschichte als Geschlechtergeschichte*, 11-29, here 13-20. Lutz Raphael and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Nach dem Boom: Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte seit 1970* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012).